

Chalking the Door: a simple home blessing

20 + C + M + B + 22



There is a tradition of blessing the door as a way of marking the New Year. It is an invitation for Jesus to be a daily guest in our home, our comings and goings, our conversations, our work and play, our joys and sorrows in the year to come. “Chalking the door” is a way to celebrate and literally mark the occasion of the Epiphany and God’s blessing of our lives and home.

A traditional way of doing this is to use chalk to write above the home’s entrance, 20 + C + M + B + 22 (or whatever numbers for the year we are entering!) The letters C, M, B have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the three magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedicat*, “May Christ bless the house.” The “+” signs represent the cross and 2022 is the year. With time the chalk will fade, as it does, we let the meaning of the symbols written sink into the depths of our heart and be manifest in our words and actions the Latin words, *Christus mansionem benedicat*, “May Christ bless the house.”

As you chalk the door you might offer any of the following prayers:

Standing on your doorstep

In the name of the Source of all Being, Eternal Word and the Holy Spirit
(or *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*)

The wise ones followed God's star to Bethlehem, seeking the saviour.

Let us/ I will follow the star.

They found Jesus in Bethlehem and knew they had found the one they were seeking.

Let us/ I will recognize Jesus.

They fell down and worshipped him, offering him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Let us/ I will offer our gifts to the Word made flesh.

The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son who became human two thousand years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the New Year and all of 2022.

God who came to dwell with us, bless this home this year and every year. Bless all who come and go through this door, both those who live here and those who visit. May all who enter through this door come in peace and bring joy. May all who come to this door find welcome and love. May the love and joy in this home overflow and spread into the community and the world.

Holy God, watch over our/my going out and coming in and fill us/me with the light of Christ, that we/I may grow in love, in wisdom, and in faith. Amen.

Artwork from Left to Right: Wise Women also came – Jan Richardson (Painted Prayerbook), Adoration of the Magi (Orthodox Icon) and Epiphany - Albert Herbert (Methodist Modern Art Collection)